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MEDIÆVAL FORGERS

AND

FORGERIES

BY

T. F. TOUT, M.A., F.B.A.

BISHOP FRASER PROFESSOR OF MEDIÆVAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

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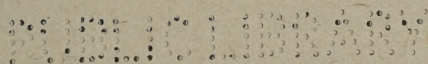
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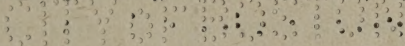
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MEDIÆVAL FORGERS AND FORGERIES.¹

BY T. F. TOUT, M.A., F.B.A.

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THE criminal is with us throughout the ages. He is with us still, though in much reduced numbers, for the farther we go back in history the more criminals we find. In the middle ages the criminal class mustered strongly. Not only were mediæval criminals more numerous than their modern counterparts, but by reason of their numbers and importance they excited much more general sympathy than they do nowadays, and were as a rule dealt with by society in a more lenient manner. This was true both of crimes of violence and crimes of deceit. In these two typical classes of misdeeds homicides and forgeries easily took the first places. In the simple middle ages there were only two great classes of society which really counted. These were the knightly or warrior class, whose business in life was to fight, and the clerical or priestly class, whose special function was to pray, and which, besides its devotional duties, had the monopoly of all intellectual activities, clerical, literary, and academic. It is hardly going too far to say that homicide was the special misdeed of the former and forgery the particular peccadillo of the latter. Few self-respecting gentlemen passed through the hot season of youth without having perpetrated a homicide or two. It was almost the duty of the clerical class to forge. If it did not always commit culpable forgeries for its own particular interest, it forged, almost from a sense of duty, for the benefit of the society, the community, the house whose interests it represented.

To discourse upon the mediæval attitude to homicide would take me too far away from my present theme, which is mediæval forgers and forgeries. But I should wish to do justice to the particular type of misdoers with which I am now specially concerned. I would, therefore, suggest in passing that forgers were not the only class given to evil deeds in an age which, for all its lawlessness, presented also some

¹ An elaboration of the lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library on the 12th December, 1919.

of the purest and most exalted types of human excellence. But the saints were few and the sinners were many, and our chief concern will not be with the hardened criminal, who forged for his own personal gain, so much as with those who forged, so to say, as a habit, and whose acts suggested little or no criminality to contemporary opinion. For to mediæval eyes forgery in itself was hardly regarded as a crime. It was not, like homicide, punishable as such. Even in the good old dark ages, when you could atone for murder by paying down a lump sum proportioned to the wealth or social status of your victim, homicide as such was still considered to be a reprehensible offence. Forgery, on the other hand, hardly comes within the modest list of offences within which the mediæval mind limited its conception of a crime. It was natural to look indulgently on an offence to which so large a proportion of the educated population was addicted. To begin with, forgery was a misdeed that was necessarily limited to clerks, for few save clerks had the technical and linguistic skill necessary to forge documents. Accordingly, all practitioners of forgery had the "benefit of clergy," and could commit at least their first offence with the comparative impunity that followed from the sympathetic consideration of the church courts for the peccadillos of brother clerks and from their canonical restriction to punishments that did not involve either loss of life or limb. I do not, however, find that the church courts ever took any cognisance of forgery at all. The clerk addicted to forgery was in a doubly secure position.

Only some sorts of forgery were regarded by the law as criminal at all. The most notable of these were the forging the King's seal or the forging of a lord's seal by a member of his household. To appreciate the reason for this special condemnation of forging seals, we must remember that the seal was in the middle ages what a man's signature is nowadays. It was the normal way of authenticating his acts, and, provided always that he looked sharply after the custody of his seal, the most effective authentication in an age when everybody wrote very much alike, and when a great many men of substance wrote little or wrote with difficulty. But a knavish servant, familiar with the form and device of his lord's seal, might easily, with the exercise of a little ingenuity, procure the fabrication of a counterfeit to it. Hence the law and public opinion agreed to reprobate very severely what was looked upon as a scandalous breach of trust. Forgery of seals then

stood in the middle ages where forgery of signatures stands nowadays. It was the particular sort of forgery most dangerous to society and therefore a clearly criminal offence.

For similar reasons certain analogous acts of forgery were included with the employment of false seals among the offences specially worthy of condemnation. Conspicuous among these were counterfeiting the king's money, issuing false coin, and shearing or defacing good coin. Such misdeeds, along with the falsification of seals, constituted the *falsioneria*, the special sort of forgery, which Henry's II's Assize of Northampton of 1176 put with murder and robbery in the category of offences which a later period would have called felony. A simpler age saw no reason, even in these cases, to impose a special penalty on forgery as such. It seemed easier to include them in the comprehensive category of treason. Accordingly the law punished offenders of this class as traitors rather than as felons. Forgers of seals and counterfeiters of coin could therefore, if they were men, be hanged, drawn and quartered, as traitors, or, if they were women, burnt at the stake, this latter being the special punishment of the female convicted of treason. Whatever the offence was called, the punishment did not fail in austerity. It was one of the compensations for general laxity in dealing with criminals that the few classes of offence that seemed most heinous should be dealt with with cruel and unrelenting severity.

As time went on, further restrictions were gradually drawn. They were enough to show that, apart from particular cases, the way of the mediæval forger was comparatively easy. In a well-known law book of the reign of Edward I forgery, even of the restricted sort we have described, was put in the catalogue of crimes after treason and before homicide.¹ Other cases of forgery were, however, regarded as among the injuries which could be indifferently treated as a civil or a criminal offence. Even the forging of a seal, which was not the seal of the king or of the forger's lord, was only considered as inflicting an "atrocious injury". It might be adequately requited, at the worst with perpetual infamy, the pillory, and the tumbrill or cucking-stool, the same punishment that was inflicted on bakers or brewsters who used false weights and measures or on such as sold putrid or half-cooked food.²

¹ Fleta, pp. 52-3, "De crimine falsi".

² *Ibid.*, p. 63, "De personalibus actionibus civilibus".

Recorded cases show, however, that the law courts showed more severity in practice than the law books laid down in theory. Thus under Henry III a Jew, named Moses son of Brown, was rash enough to bring an action for debt against the prior and convent of Dunstaple in Bedfordshire, and to produce in court, as evidence of the debt, a deed which purported to be evidence of a loan which he had made to the convent. The king's justices examined the deed and pronounced it a forgery. It was shown in evidence that the seal was not the proper current seal; the canon, who had written every deed of the convent for forty years, swore that it did not come from his hands; the parchment had been washed, and new and clumsy sentences, some containing bad grammar, had been substituted for the original writing. In short the astute Moses had made use of another Dunstaple deed, deposited with him as a pledge, and had "cooked it up," rather unskillfully, to represent something quite different from what it was originally. His own examination proved far from satisfactory. The upshot was that the justices put Moses into the Tower, and it was expected that in due course he would have been hanged. However, his coreligionists bribed the king so heavily that the culprit was allowed to abjure the realm.¹

A Christian forger of the same period could get off much more lightly. There was a petty dispute between six modest heiresses and their husbands as to the division of their father's little estate of eighteen acres of land, in Warwickshire. One of the happy couples sought in addition to its modest share to prove its claim to a virgate of land which the husband said had been given to him, not on his marriage, as the other side averred, but eight years earlier on the simple condition of homage. "Then," so runs the record, "he produced a deed in proof of his claim. And the deed was viewed and it was seen to be false, because the wax of the seal was not three years old. It was, therefore, pronounced invalid and the claimant was kept in custody. Afterwards he came and acknowledged the forgery, and allowed that the virgate of land held by him ought to be added to the land to be divided." As no more is heard of him, this judicious recognition of guilt seems to have secured him his release, and in addition

¹ *Ann. Dunstaple*, pp. 66. Compare Cole's *Records*, p. 312. This was in 1221.

all that he had any right to get out of the estate.¹ Christians apparently were harder to hang than Jews, even when they had not the wherewithal to bribe their judges.

The lenient treatment of the forger, who did not by forging commit treason, was enhanced by the fact that he was not apparently indicted for making or using a forged seal with the intention of defrauding, but for producing a document so authenticated in a court of justice and basing his case upon it. The production in court of the forged seal corresponded to the intent to defraud of modern codes. There seems no evidence of a forger convicted or even indicted of a forgery as such. While the common law was hazy, the statute law was silent. It was not until the reign of Henry V that a civil remedy against forgery was given by statute. Under Elizabeth the law was stiffened up. The forger was to be fined, imprisoned, put in the pillory, to have his ears cut off, and his nostrils slit and to lose his land. This takes us back to the state of things under Edward I. At last, in the reign of Charles I, forgery at last became felony without benefit of clergy, and therefore a capital offence. It is a curious instance of the late middle ages being more easy going than Angevin times. Can clerical immunities have had this effect? Was it left for the Reformation to restore the offence to its old position? Was this one of the last surrenders of a sometime clerical privilege?

We get nearer the heart of our subject when we turn our backs on the law of forgery and proceed to interrogate the motives of the forgers. Here the field becomes at once infinitely wider, for the chief sorts of fabrication with which we shall have to deal are those whose origin was not specifically criminal in the legal, and often not even in the moral sense. Let us begin by distinguishing forged documents from the point of view of the motives of the forgers.

Many mediæval forgeries have their roots in nothing worse than vanity. A church or a family was anxious to prove its origin was more ancient than it really was, and to claim as its founder or ancestor one of the great names of old. If this reason inspired many forgeries in the case of Benedictine abbeys and noble families, whose real antiquity was quite respectable, it was still more strongly operative in the case of parvenu institutions or individuals who could boast of no such glorious past. Now Universities, which only began in the twelfth

¹ *Bracton's Note Book*, ed. Maitland, II, 715-16.

century, were such parvenu institutions. Yet by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries they had acquired such a strong position that it seemed impossible to imagine that there had ever been a time when such noble foundations had had no existence and unfilial on the part of their members not to seek out their roots in remote antiquity. Thus the University of Paris claimed Charles the Great as its founder, and Oxford, not to be outdone, found its origin in the schools of Alfred the Great. Cambridge went one better and traced itself back to King Arthur or to a Spanish prince named Cantaber, whose date is somewhat vaguely indicated. But this lie is, like the fame of Cambridge, post mediæval.

Family vanity was even more active a motive for forgery than institutional *esprit de corps*. The false pedigree-maker is still with us, and there have been few families that have arisen to sudden distinction or opulence that have not called in his services. Gross lies were told in genealogical matters in the middle ages, but the mediæval magnate had seldom the practical motives which in more modern times have induced the numerous new men, who have arrived, to buy pedigrees or armorial bearings from heralds or family portraits or even ancestral tombs from unscrupulous purveyors of mock antiquities. Accordingly it is rather in later centuries, when social conditions were more fluid than in the middle ages, that false genealogies became most common. It may perhaps be permitted to warn the fabricator of bogus pedigrees not to go further back in history than respectability requires. It is very difficult for even the greatest experts to concoct a specious mediæval pedigree. Let such as would attempt it, read and digest the diverting exposition by Mr. J. H. Round of the attempts of two different prosperous families, whose chief link of connection was the common enjoyment of the respectable name of Smith, to claim descent from a mythical standard-bearer of Richard Cœur de Lion.¹ But all these attempts, whether mediæval or modern, generally break down by reason of their being too interesting. They are too lavish in their imagination; they give too many picturesque details; they suggest the quickly recurring incidents of a melodrama or a novel, rather than the drab-coloured and unstimulating history which too commonly arises from the meticulous study of the authentic records of the past.

¹ J. H. Round, *Peerage and Pedigree*, II, 134-257.

Sometimes the mediæval forger forged from love of country rather than from the narrower sentiment of pride in house or family. "Reasons of State" have led governments—and that not in mediæval times only—to employ whole armies of skilful forgers to demonstrate their claims against an enemy or confuse him with false news. Philip the Fair instigated the fabrication of a papal bull designed to hold up to popular opprobrium the policy of Boniface VIII. A king of Naples caused the forgery of the bull of another pope which professed to separate Italy from the Empire. The appetite for forging grew upon what it fed on. Such experts in deceit naturally turned their skill to their own private profit. Thus we find that officials of a chancery were willing for a consideration to forge deeds in the interest of private persons as well as for the good of the state. There was a famous case where a ruffianly count of Armagnac bribed a papal official to draw up in his favour a papal bull authorising him to marry his own sister. Such a bull was authentic to all outward appearances; its defect was that it was entirely unauthorised by the authority from which it professed to emanate. There is hardly a state in Europe in which similar scandals did not occur from time to time.

Sometimes it remains a matter of controversy whether private enterprise or official deceit inspired famous forgeries. The most notorious mediæval forgery, the Donation of Constantine, the act by which Constantine retired to his new capital on the Bosphorus leaving Rome clear for the papal autocracy, enriched by the grant of imperial lands, was certainly devised in the interests of the papacy, though the time, place, and manner of its fabrication are far from being cleared up. But it was the private enterprise of some enemies of the Roman lawyers at Oxford that caused the concoction of a pretended bull, excluding doctors of civil law from all ecclesiastical benefices and prohibiting the teaching of Roman law in all countries which were under the customary law of feudalism. These forgers had the effrontery to publish this document during the lifetime of the very pope, Innocent IV, whose name they had taken in vain. In such cases professional zeal and personal gain worked hand in hand in the work of deception.

Some mediæval forgeries were almost entirely innocent of any intent to deceive, and many forged documents contain facts that are substantially correct. Pedantic love of the letter, and meticulous insistence on traditional forms combined to make forgery almost a laud-

able, altogether a necessary act. Of this type is the large class of copies which the custom of the early middle ages required should imitate in handwriting and technique the method of the originals, and which have often been so dexterously executed that it requires all the skill of the trained modern expert in diplomatic to distinguish between the copy, and the original. By the twelfth century these *copies figurées*, as the French call them, cease to have any importance. But lapse of time, war, neglect and fraud had caused the disappearance of many originals, so that the only evidence of a grant might well be a late copy, written out along with a large number of other charters in one of those valuable but puzzling collections called *cartularies*. When the establishment of orderly states with organised chanceries, or writing offices, arose, it was the interest of all individuals or communities, that had no original deeds to prove their rights, to seek from the king or prince an official confirmation of their possessions to which their claim had thus become questionable. This was the more so since many ancient estates were never, so far as we know, granted to their holders by any written instrument at all. They were what in England was called *folkland*, land held by the evidence of common knowledge, the witness of the people, as opposed to *bookland*, land held by virtue of a charter, or deed of grant. But an age which asked for title deeds grew suspicious of a title vouched by no written record. Just as our Edward I demanded in his writs of *quo warranto* that the lords of franchises should produce the warranty by which they held their liberties, so might any reigning prince well ask of a vassal or of an ancient house of religion their evidence that the lands they held really belonged to them. Now English law of the later middle ages provided an easy method of strengthening a doubtful title. On production of an old charter, it received from chancery confirmation under the great seal. But the officials of the chancery required the applicant for a charter of confirmation to produce the original of a charter that for some reason he wished to have confirmed. The process was so easy and so common that in the earliest tariff of chancery fees that is of record—it goes back to 1199—there was a much larger fee charged for a charter of confirmation than for a charter of grant.¹

¹ *Foedera*, I, 75-6. The "simple confirmation to which nothing new is added" seems to have cost something like one-ninth of the "new charter of feoffment of lands and liberties".

The result was that the chancery rolls, both charter and patent rolls, are full of charters of confirmation, reciting various charters which the king had inspected and which he confirmed and strengthened by his own authority. Charters of this sort are called charters of *inspeximus* in England and of *vidimus* in France. But the inspection or view demanded the production of the original that was to be recited. What was to be done if no original was forthcoming? It may have been that no charter had ever existed: that the grant had been oral or traditional. It may have been that the original had been lost, stolen, or destroyed. In some such cases there was no record of it: in most there would be a copy in some chartulary of later date. But the pedantic bureaucrat—government officials in the middle ages were generally pedantic—would not look at anything but an original. If then the original did not exist, it had to be made. The applicant for a charter then had to make a false original which he naturally strove to make as real to look at as his knowledge and skill allowed. He, therefore, copied out from his cartulary the document in a hand which seemed to him like the hand of other early documents in his possession. He cut off the seal from some document that he did not regard as being of any great use to him, and clapped it on to the charter that was to be produced before the chancery clerks. But mediæval man, though excessively ingenious, learned, and plausible, was almost altogether lacking in the rudiments of a historic sense. To him as to the modern peerage lawyer or to some sorts of modern politicians, who have sometimes begun life as peerage lawyers, history presented a flat, plane surface. He could not understand that each age has its particular forms and technicalities. He knew best those of his own age, and he imagined that what he found in the document he was most familiar with belonged to all time. He was a reformer too in his way and wanted his charter to be up to date. He was, therefore, in all innocence prone to copy out the technical forms in vogue in his own age. And the methods which innocence might adopt from sheer lack of historic sense, art and fraud, could also appropriate from entire ignorance of how things were really done in remote ages. In both sorts of cases the officials were easily taken in. The chancery clerk accepted with a light heart the documents set before him, and, having pocketed his big fees, cheerfully wrote them out in the confirmatory *inspeximus* and *vidimus*. The law courts were more

careful, but even these were liable to be deceived. It was only the clumsiest of practitioners, like Moses son of Brown, or the Warwickshire couple, whose adventures we have described, that could be easily convicted of their gross and palpable frauds. Thus the innocent falsifier runs into the fraudulent deceiver, and thus in dismissing the motives of the mediæval forger we have drifted imperceptibly into the process by which such falsifications were perpetrated. I would willingly dwell at length on the methods of mediæval falsification, both in their innocent and guilty aspects. But the subject is a big one, and all that can be done here is to make a few desultory remarks upon it.

There was no lack of skill and cunning in the mediæval forger. He knew how to erase the writing from ancient parchments and re-write them in a feigned archaic hand. He showed marvellous intelligence in the manipulation of authentic seals and in their transference to surreptitious documents. He was clever enough to cut the wax, or lead, into two thin slices with a sharp knife and introduce new attachments of parchment, silk, or leather, so that it could be affixed to a new document, the sides being carefully heated up so that the two halves could again be fastened innocently together. If the original, after all his care, still remained suspicious, he could always conveniently lose it and produce a confessedly modern copy, plus evidence from those who had seen and handled the original. No doubt the English Chancery's insistence on the production of an original was based upon fraudulent attempts of this sort.

Just as in mediæval warfare the art of defending fortresses was superior to the art of attacking them, so in the sword play of wits, to which mediæval forgeries gave occasion, the art of fabricating spurious documents was more advanced than the critical gifts which the age possessed for detecting literary impostures. Yet we must not assume that there was no mediæval criticism, and that it was left to moderns to apply the rules of common sense and evidence to bring the forger to book. So early as the ninth century a knavish bishop of Le Mans was convicted of forging charters to the detriment of the rights of the abbey of Saint Calais. A letter of Innocent III explained to the chapter of Milan with admirable lucidity why a false bull, presented to them, was suspicious in style and handwriting, and the artful way in which a genuine seal had been adopted for the service of the spurious document. The pope's letter is quite a little treatise on the rules for

detecting forged documents.¹ Again in the early fourteenth century a French dominican, Bernard Gui, employed in the criticism of suspicious documents principles which, as M. Delisle says, no modern scholar would disavow. And a little later the letter in which Petrarch explained to the emperor Charles IV that there was no warranty for believing that Julius Cæsar and Nero had conferred any privileges on the house of Austria is a model essay on diplomatic criticism.

It must, however, be admitted that in our period the critics are the exceptions to the general rule of unthinking credulity. And there were good reasons for the ordinary man desiring to evade the responsibility of detecting forgeries, emanating from or patronised by persons of position. Such great persons, such powerful societies, were accomplices in falsification that it required a rare share of public spirit for a humble critic to expose too coarsely their methods of manipulating documents. There is no more respectable name among the archbishops of Canterbury than that of Lanfranc. He was a statesman, a scholar, a jurist, and a divine. At one time at least of his life he was enough of an enthusiast to forsake a promising worldly career as a lawyer to take the monastic vows in the poverty-stricken and austere house of Bec. Yet this eminent dignitary of the church did not scruple to facilitate his triumph over the rival metropolitan of York in 1072 by an elaborate series of forgeries,² which, it is suspected, must have been of his own fabrication. And the falsification was the less necessary, since justice seems to have been substantially on Lanfranc's side.

Thus forgery ran rampant all through the middle ages. It was largely undetected ; still more largely unpunished. A decent anonymity veils from our eyes the names of the best practitioners of the art, whether they forged from malice or tradition, or simply for forgery's sake, from that sheer delight in clever mystification which marks the forger who has a share of that artistic temperament which was assuredly not rare in the middle ages. There is no wonder that when the great scholars of the seventeenth century, the first men who, standing outside the middle ages, seriously attempted to understand mediæval conditions, had got well warmed to their work, they found themselves baffled and confused by the enormous proportion of forged, remade, confected, and

¹ Baluze, *Epistolæ Innocentii III*, i, 101.

² H. Böhmer, *Die Fälschungen Erzbischof Lanfranks von Canterbury*, Leipzig, 1902.

otherwise mutilated documents with which they had to deal. The Protestants easily explained this by a reference to the blind days of popery and monkery ; but orthodox "religious," devoted sons of the Roman Church, experienced the same difficulties and suggested, though in different phrasing, the same answer to their questionings. Conspicuous among these was a Jesuit, Daniel van Papenbroeck; who had been for twenty years director of the great Bollandist *Acta Sanctorum*, a many-volumed collection of lives of saints, which the Bollandist Jesuits were publishing at Antwerp, which has been in course of issue ever since and is not yet finished. Papenbroeck was so puzzled how to treat the great structures of pious fraud that surrounded the early history of ancient monasteries and the lives of their saintly founders, that he came to the rash conclusion that all documents contained in ancient cartularies were deliberate falsifications by eleventh century monks and that the older they were the more likely were charters to be suspicious. To prove his case, he made special reference to a set of more than suspicious charters of the royal abbey of Saint Denis, near Paris.

This aroused the whole Benedictine order against the upstart Jesuit, who had, with an audacity transcending that of the worst of heretics, questioned the sacred sources of early monasticism. The limitations of Papenbroeck's scholarship made it easy to deal with his strangely sweeping and unscientific generalisations. Unluckily for the Bollandist, and luckily for historic science, his tractate provoked an answer from John Mabillon, a Benedictine monk of that wonderful congregation of Saint Maur, which had begun to pour forth from the Parisian abbey of Saint Germain-des-Près the admirable collection of works of mediæval erudition that have to this day retained much of their value. In 1681, only six years after the attack on the authenticity of monastic charters, Mabillon issued his crushing answer to Papenbroeck in his great work *De re diplomatica*, wherein he not only completely demolished the poor Jesuit but laid down the general lines of the modern science of *diplomatic* by indicating the general principles by which the authenticity of mediæval documents must be tested. This book marks a turning-point in the history of scholarship the beginning of modern historical criticism. It has suggested the lines on which subsequent scholars have built up the scientific criticism of ancient documents, how to distinguish between the true and the false. If the rules of modern diplomatic are now more vigorous than

these of Mabillon, he nevertheless laid its foundations with extraordinary surety and skill. It is a pleasing conclusion of the story to know that Papebroeck was among the first of Mabillon's converts. "I assure you," wrote this magnanimous soul to Mabillon, "that my only consolation for having written upon this subject is that I have given you an opportunity to write your book. Do not hesitate to say publicly, whenever you have a chance to do so, that I am now entirely of your way of thinking."

Up to now I have been giving you generalities. But example is better than precept, and I should like to illustrate the general nature of the falsification of mediæval documents by telling you in some detail the story of two of the most notorious forgeries of mediæval documents. Both of these cases involve not merely the fabrication of a single document. Both are on a scale that in each instance runs to the size of a moderate volume. One is a late fourteenth century forgery of an alleged early twelfth century history: the other is an eighteenth century fabrication of an imaginary fourteenth century original. Both were generally accepted as authentic: both have been abundantly proved to be absolute and complete fabrications. Yet they have been so long used by numerous writers that a generation ago there was hardly a textbook that did not swallow wholesale the lies of these writers. Even nowadays historical sanitary science has its work cut out to destroy the extraordinarily tenacious microbes, which breed so readily that they are still liable to infect the pure wells of history. For that reason I am emboldened to tell once more the tales of deceit involved in the *Historia Crowlandensis*, the history of Crowland Abbey, by the false Ingulf, and the tractate *De Situ Britanniae*, by the pseudo Richard of Cirencester.

Half-way between Peterborough and Spalding, on the right bank of the Welland, amidst the fens and marshes of the Lincolnshire Holland, the little abbey town of Crowland still preserves in the surviving portions of the monastic church and its unique triangular bridge relics of its former greatness. The religious history of the place begins when a noble anchorite, St. Guthlac, set up his solitary dwelling in this remote island of the fenland, early in the ninth century. Some time later, a monastery arose to commemorate his memory, but when and how we know not, for the early life of Guthlac tells us nothing of its existence. It is very likely that this obscure house was overwhelmed

by the Danish invasions of the ninth century, and restored on a firmer basis in the days of Edgar and Dunstan. It is certain that it assumed a new importance with the monastic revival that preceded and followed the Norman Conquest. As ruled by two English abbots in succession, in a time when most of the great houses of religion were in Norman hands, and as the tomb of the last of the English earls, Waltheof, Crowland Abbey had a particular attraction to the English in the generation after the Norman Conquest. The second of these English abbots, Ingulf, combined with English birth, discipline in a French monastery, and service in the court of William the Conqueror as one of his scribes. His abbacy was chiefly marked by a disastrous fire that destroyed many of the books and records of the house. On Ingulf's death in 1109, Geoffrey, a monk of Saint-Evroult in Normandy, was appointed his successor and set to work to reconstitute the history and traditions of the house. With this object he invited to Crowland a brother monk of Saint-Evroult, called Ordericus Vitalis, who, like Ingulf, was a monk of English birth and Norman training. Orderic the Englishman was probably already busy in preparing his great ecclesiastical history which was to give him enduring fame. He spent five weeks at Crowland in 1115 and afterwards wrote down in his history all that we really know of the history of the abbey up to his date.¹ He also, perhaps, wrote down a little more than the truth, for his record contains the substance of a charter, "sealed with the seal" of Ethelbald, King of the Mercians, recording certain grants to the church, made when that king visited Guthlac. By it Ethelbald granted the holy man a wide extent of lands, five miles to the east, three to the west, two to the north, and two to the south of the site of the saint's home. Besides this there is a charter of Thurketil, the refounder of the abbey, making large gifts from his own patrimony, "sealed with the seal of the most strenuous King Edgar". Here we are in the beginning of the Crowland forgeries, for though early grants to the monastery are certain, and many of the lands enumerated in Thurketil's charters are recorded in Domesday as the ancient domains of the abbey even before the days of Edward the Confessor, it is curious that Ethelbald of Mercia and Edgar the Peaceful should seal charters with their seal, after the fashion which only came with Edward the Confessor

¹ Ordericus Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, II, 268-90. Ed Le Prevost, Société de l'Histoire de France.

and William I. It is strange too that Ethelbald, visiting Crowland as king, should have made grants to Guthlac who died before that event took place. But there is little impossible in the substance of the charters, were it not that the later history of Crowland makes us suspicious. On the face of it, it looks as if Geoffrey the abbot had imported his old friend from Saint-Evrault to write up the history of the abbey and had unloaded on him as much information, apocryphal and other, as he had thought he was likely to assimilate. There is no reason for imagining that Orderic was not acting in good faith. Indeed there is no special reason for imputing any grave criminality to the abbot. It was a time when every monastery was investigating its claims to its lands. What more natural, if the Danes or the floods had destroyed title deeds, than that the friends of the house should do their best to reconstitute the vanished past? And, reconstitution once allowed, it was best to make a good job of it. So the dutiful monks of Crowland set themselves to work to follow the example of Lanfranc, their metropolitan. We may note, however, for future reference that, according to Orderic, neither Thurketil nor Ingulf wrote histories themselves. All that Ingulf had to do with books was to witness the burning of the abbey library.

We must now jump on for three centuries in the history of Crowland. About the reign of Richard II, there seems to have been another wave of tendency towards substantiating the claims of the monks to the lands in their possession. Drainage was turning some of their fens into good pasture and arable lands, and estates long waterlogged and useless were beginning to yield good commercial profits. Monasteries no longer held the same strong position in the public eye that they had held in Norman days. The king was casting a greedy eye on the temporalities of the church: the local lords were envying the church that was dressed out in the feathers of other birds; Wycliffe and the friars preached the same doctrine of apostolic poverty, though with somewhat different applications. It was, therefore, high time that the "possessioner" monks should disturb themselves or they would have nothing left to possess. Late fourteenth century Crowland was not particularly scrupulous. For instance, in 1384 there was need to investigate a charge of brigandage brought against the abbot John by a Northampton merchant, who complained that the abbot and a band of followers, "after long lying in wait" took him prisoner, shut him

up in a castle, and treated him so austere-ly that he was compelled to pay a fine of 40s. "for his greater ease in prison," and his friends were reduced to drawing up a bond for £200 to be paid for his release. Yet "notwithstanding this, the abbot and his associates kept the poor merchant in prison at Northampton" until the unlucky trader was himself compelled to enter into a similar writing for £300 "to keep them indemnified towards the abbot and they now threaten to take and imprison him again."¹ What truth lay in these charges I know not, but the story suggests an atmosphere of Greek or Sicilian brigandage, organised on as business-like a scale as that of Hadgi-Stavros in Edmond About's delightful *Roi des Montagnes*.

Crimes of violence jostled with crimes of deceit. Ten years later the Patent Rolls recite how, in 1393, King Richard had inspected the charter of Ethelbald, King of the Mercians, dated 716, and a charter of Edred, King of England, dated 948, in favour of the abbot and convent of Crowland, and had duly ordered their confirmation.² We have seen that to produce such a confirmation an original had to be produced, sufficiently specious to be acceptable to the clerks of the chancery. We know, then, that the forger was already at work. To make assurance doubly sure, he obtained from the new king, Henry IV, a new *inspeximus* and a confirmation of the *inspeximus* of the dethroned Richard.³ Nevertheless enough had not yet been done to safeguard the abbey property. There was a particular danger from its northern neighbours, the prior and monks of Spalding, whose claims had always clashed with those of Crowland, and whose power was now enhanced by the transference of the crown to the house of Lancaster, which, as earls of Lincoln, claimed the lordship of Spalding as part of the honour of Bolingbroke. If John of Gaunt, as duke, had been a thorn in the side of Crowland, his son, as king, might well do it more grievous harm. A fierce dispute in the law courts about 1413 brought things to a crisis. In the hope of thoroughly confounding their rivals at Spalding, Crowland put forth its final effort in forgery. The earlier falsified documents were carefully strengthened by a whole crowd of fictitious charters; they were strung together in a continuous and picturesque narrative; the whole was given to the world as the

¹ *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1381-5*, p. 421.

² *Ibid.*, 1391-6, p. 300.

³ *Ibid.*, 1399-1401, p. 76.

History of Crowland, and this false history was fathered on the abbot Ingulf. Finally, as an afterthought, the false Ingulf has a forged continuation which is assigned to a writer of the age of Henry II, Peter of Blois.

The early history of the fraud is obscure, but from the sixteenth century onwards it became generally accepted. It was quoted under Elizabeth to prove that Cambridge University was flourishing in Norman times. In the seventeenth century it deceived most of the antiquaries and historians, including such great scholars as Dugdale and Spelman. The note of warning was sounded by the learned Henry Wharton, and Hickes, the English Mabillon, declared strongly that the charters were forgeries. Gibbon sneered at its statement that Ingulf studied at Oxford books of Aristotle, not known at that time in Europe. But all the literary historians, from Hume downwards, eagerly adopted its picturesque purple patches. While good chroniclers have not to this day found an English translator, the pseudo-Ingulf was done into the vernacular time after time. The long series of apocryphal charters are solemnly set forth in the last edition of the *Monasticon*. The local historian, the guide-book writer, the text-book maker all made Ingulf his own. When the nineteenth century found him out, and a crowd of scholars, Palgrave, Riley, Liebermann, Searle, published conclusive demolitions of his statements, the pseudo-Ingulf still kept some conscious and more unconscious disciples. Less than forty years ago a scholar, officially attached to the British Museum, and supposed to be enough of an expert to edit the whole corpus of Anglo-Saxon charters, maintained that, though spurious in form, Ingulf's charters were reconstructions of original deeds and therefore contained much true history. It requires a faith greater than the faith that moves mountains to clear away the lofty pile of lies that has overwhelmed the good faith of the monks of Crowland.

That such doctrine can have been preached down to our own days is startling evidence that the science of Mabillon has not yet said its final word. But difficult as is the problem of separating the wheat from the chaff in the "remade" and "conflated" and otherwise doctored Norman and Saxon charters, it requires no very deep criticism to see that the pseudo-Ingulf is just a novel with a purpose, and that purpose fraud and deceit. To begin with, there is no manuscript of the chronicle older than the sixteenth century. The "autograph of Ingulf," which

Spelman is said to have seen, has mysteriously disappeared with all the other pre-Tudor copies. The narrative and charters alike teem with all sorts of anachronisms. The place-names are in the form of the fourteenth and not of earlier centuries. The forger did not know the difference between Anglo-Saxon and Norman Latin terms. He puts earls of Lincoln and Leicester in Anglo-Saxon times and calls Saxon nobles after the names of castles founded by Normans. He makes Thurketil the chancellor of Edward the Elder, though the first English king to have a chancellor was Edward the Confessor. He says that the triangular bridge, a fourteenth century structure, existed in the tenth century. He puts fiefs, manors, sheriffs, archdeaconries, seals, vicars, into ages which knew them not. He sends dead men on missions to kings and princes; he makes Ingulf on his travels visit an emperor who was not yet an emperor, and a patriarch who was already in his grave. He makes Thurketil recommend as bishops people who died years before he was born. He makes aged monks, driven away by heathen Danes, come back to restore the abbey and resume their monastic routine, and die, years afterwards, at such ages as 148, 142, and 115. He makes Ingulf study in the non-existent University of Oxford the metaphysics of Aristotle at a time when that work was unknown in Western Europe. He makes monks of Crowland journey over daily from their Cambridgeshire manor of Cottenham to give lectures in a barn at Cambridge on grammar, logic, and rhetoric. He makes Englishmen in the tenth century use French as a vernacular speech. But why go on multiplying instances? The anachronisms and contradictions are so numerous that I can see no use whatever for the book, unless it is to guide the historical tiro in his initial steps in the art of detecting forgery. But to all teachers I still feel there is need to say "Beware of the false Ingulf and all his works".¹ When you find Ingulf quoted, put away for ever the book that thus stamps itself as belated and unscientific.

With all his practice, the mediæval forger was a poor hand at his job. Let us turn then to another famous forger, who lived less than

¹ The best demonstrations of the pseudo-Ingulf forgeries are those of Sir Francis Palgrave in *Quarterly Review*, W. G. Searle's *Ingulf and the Historia Crowlandensis* in the *Transactions of the Cambridge Archæological Society*, 1894, and, more thorough of all, that of Dr. F. Liebermann, "Über ostenglische Geschichtsquellen, besonders den falschen Ingulf," in *Neues Archiv*, XVIII, 227-67, 1892-3.

two hundred years ago, and see whether the eighteenth century, that age of reason, enlightenment, and sober judgment, could not go one better in falsification than the later middle ages. Let us turn from the pseudo-Ingulf to the false Richard of Cirencester.

About the same time that Crowland was preparing the way for the colossal mystification of the false Ingulf, there lived in the sister abbey of St. Peter's, Westminster, a monk of the house named Richard of Cirencester. The excellent list of Westminster monks which Dr. Pearce, the new bishop of Worcester, has put together from the remarkable archives of the abbey,¹ tells us at a glance what is known of his long and uneventful career. A novice in 1354-5, Richard sang his first mass in 1361-2, went through the various grades of office, sojourned at Oxford as a student, went to Rome as a pilgrim, and at last died in 1400. The only noteworthy thing that he did was to write a dull and useless compilation setting forth at length the history of English kings before the Norman Conquest, called the *Speculum Historiale*, the Historical Mirror, which has been, rather unnecessarily, printed, fifty years ago, in the Rolls Series. But even in the bad old days of the beginnings of the Chronicles and Memorials Series, I have grave doubts whether such stuff would ever have seen the splendour of two volumes of print, had not the blameless Richard had fathered on him one of the most audacious and successful forgeries of modern times, and that the edition of Richard's real book gave the learned editor, Dr. J. E. B. Mayor, an opportunity of denouncing in an elaborate introduction the cheat who had taken poor Richard's name in vain. How this came about, we must now discover.

In 1747 there lived at Stamford, in Lincolnshire, Dr. William Stukeley, vicar of All Saints' Church in that historic borough. Stukeley, who had already attained the ripe age of sixty, was a man of considerable reputation, gained in many different spheres. He had been a flourishing physician and had then become a still more flourishing divine. He was a man of science who had long been a prominent member of the Royal Society, and was proud of his "particular friendship" with the great Sir Isaac Newton. Above all he was an archæologist, who had taken a prominent part in founding the London Society of Antiquaries, of which body he had acted as the first secretary.

¹ E. H. Pearce, *The Monks of Westminster*, p. 100.

He had amassed a vast quantity of miscellaneous and undigested learning, and was specially interested in Roman and "Druidical" antiquities. His chief virtue was a habit, then rare, of wishing to see things for himself. This commendable practice had made him a mighty traveller. He had put together the results of his journeys in a curious but not unattractive work, called *Iter Curiosum*. His chief foible was his entire lack of criticism and judgment. Among other things his ill-regulated fancy led him to see the Druids in all things and to regard "Druidism" as "the aboriginal patriarchal religion". It gave him a corresponding weakness for freemasonry, which he believed to be "the remains of the mysteries of the ancients". His last work had been an anticipation of the favourite literary aberration of the late Mr. Gladstone, for he had attempted to indicate "how heathen mythology was derived from sacred history and how the Bacchus of the poets is no other than the Jehovah of Scripture". Stukeley was a harmless, pompous, self-satisfied sort of person, honest enough in the main, but one of whom his best friends could only say that he was compounded of simplicity, ingenuity, superstition, and antiquarianism. He had a touch of humour, too, preaching, when nearly eighty, his first sermon in spectacles on the text "Now we see as through a glass darkly," and so zealous a votary of science that he postponed morning prayers for an hour that his parishioners should have an opportunity of witnessing an eclipse of the sun. He was a great collector of coins and had a rare gift for nosing out mare's nests. Witness his famous find of Oriuna, the wife of Carausius, a discovery that had no more solid basis than a hasty misreading of the word FORTUNA, inscribed on a coin of the would-be Emperor. But he was a considerable personage withal, both in the social and learned worlds. We can read his nature easily enough in his portrait by Kneller. In this smug complacency, well-fed self-satisfaction, good-natured benevolence, and robust health appear patently to all beholders.

On 11 June, 1747, the rural solitude of the great doctor's retreat in the wilds of a flourishing town, "where I looked upon myself as buried for life," was broken by the receipt of a letter from an unknown correspondent, Professor Charles Bertram of Copenhagen. The "professor" was a young man of four and twenty who was earning an honest living as teacher of the English language in the marine academy of the Danish capital. The son of an English silk-dyer,

Bertram was a Londoner born, but had been taken at an early age to Copenhagen, where his father had set up a hosier's shop. It is to be regretted that we know but little of the elusive personality of Mr. Bertram, but he must clearly have been a clever fellow, well educated, enterprising, audacious, and not overtroubled with scruples. He was eager to get on, and, some months after his correspondence with Stukeley began, he petitioned the Senate of the University of Copenhagen not to allow his profession of English Churchmanship to be a bar to his matriculation as a student at that University, where rigid Lutheranism was a normal condition of admission. His teaching post must have been a very humble one, and it was a feather in the cap of the audacious arrivist that he had so easily attracted the attention of the eminent hermit of Stamford.

Let Stukeley tell the tale of the results of the shot fired at a venture by the ingenious Mr. Bertram. The first letter of the "gentleman unknown to me" was "polite, full of compliments, as usual with foreigners, expressing much candour and respect for me; being only acquainted with some works of mine published. The letter was dated the year before: for all that time he hesitated in sending it." The doctor was much flattered at its contents. "I wonder," he wrote in his Diary, "at the meaning of his finding me out in obscurity." What Bertram was after, subsequent correspondence gradually revealed.

To Bertram's first letter Stukeley returned a civil answer. This produced further correspondence, including a prolix and elaborate letter from "the famous Mr. *Gramm* . . . a learned gentleman who had been in England and visited our Universities. He was Mr. *Bertram's* great friend and patron."

"I answered that letter," said Stukeley, "and it created a correspondence between us. Among other matters Mr. Bertram mentioned to me a manuscript in a friend's hands, of Richard of Westminster, being a history of Roman Britain, which he thought a great curiosity; and an ancient map of the island annex'd." Then ensued some delay. The Duke of Montagu, drew Stukeley "from a beloved retirement" by presenting him to the living of St. George's, Queen-Square, Holborn. "When I became fix'd in *London*," continued Stukeley, "I thought it proper to cultivate my *Copenhagen* correspondent." The "famous Mr. *Gramm*" was now dead and Stukeley and Bertram

were consequently in direct relations once more. "I now," wrote Stukeley, "began to think of the manuscript and desired some little extract of it." The result was "an imitation of the handwriting," which the keeper of the Cotton Library "immediately pronounced to be 400 years old". Now came the tug of war. "I press'd," continued Stukeley, "Mr. Bertram to get the manuscript into his hands, if possible, which at length, with some difficulty he accomplish'd; and on my sollicitation . . . a transcript of the whole; and at last a copy of the map." "Upon perusal I seriously solicited him to print it, as the greatest treasure we now can boast of in that kind of learning." Bertram, however, proved coy. Some years elapsed, during which Stukeley made the further suggestion that Bertram's "Richard of Westminster" might well be the Westminster monk, Richard of Cirencester, with whose *Speculum* he seems to have been acquainted. Bertram thankfully took the hint. In 1756 the faithful Stukeley gave him a puff preliminary in the shape of a paper read before the Society of Antiquaries and published in their transactions. In 1757 Bertram published at Copenhagen a volume in which, along with Gildas and Nennius, "Richard of Cirencester," *De Situ Britanniae*, first saw the light, accompanied by the "ancient map" and an elaborate commentary by the fortunate discoverer.

The eighteenth century had more "enlightenment" but hardly more "historical sense" than the middle ages. It had certainly less learning and real criticism than the great seventeenth century scholars who had been taken in by the false Ingulf. It was no great wonder, then, that Richard of Cirencester, so whole-heartedly introduced by the learned Dr. Stukeley, should have led captive the antiquarians and historians of the age of reason. There was no one to ask why a monk who lived under Edward III should have any more means of knowing about Roman Britain than the rector of St. George's, Queen's Square, or the professor of English in the marine school at Copenhagen. There was nobody even to take the trouble to compare the map, presented to the London antiquaries in 1756, with the very different map issued by Bertram in 1757. Soon Stukeley republished Richard in a second series of his *Iter Curiosum*. Henry Hatcher of Salisbury set forth the precious text in English, and bore "unequivocal testimony" to its fidelity and exactitude. He protested

that the "unaffected candour" and "laudable zeal" of Richard, his contentment with the "humble honours" of a compiler, showed that he had neither the "inducement nor the inclination to incur the guilt or deception of forgery". Still more emphatic was John Whitaker, the historian of Manchester, who made Richard a chief authority for his "antiquarian romance," which consecrated two volumes to the history of Manchester before the Norman Conquest. Whitaker declared ecstatically that "all the embodied antiquaries of the fourteenth and three succeeding centuries could not have forged so learned a detail of Roman antiquities". In this remark Whitaker was more right than he knew, for it is precisely the non-mediæval character of the pseudo-Richard that convinces the modern scholar that the book was not composed in the Middle Ages.

Even at the time of its first publication, there were some cautious scholars who ventured to suggest that there was a large element of imagination in Richard of Cirencester's work. But they were voices crying in the wilderness. For the best part of a century, every work dealing with Roman Britain implicitly accepted all the forger's statements. To this day atlases and school books have hardly yet been purged of the precise boundaries of the Constantinian provinces of Roman Britain, which are due solely to the imagination of this new "source". To this day text-book writers and popularisers copy out from their predecessors "facts" as to Romano-British history which have no other basis than his imaginations, and it is the more lamentable since most of them have long formally repudiated his authority. The local antiquary finds it even harder to cleanse his system of the virus of Richard than he does to purge it of the infection of the false Ingulf. The Ordnance Survey faithfully marked in its maps the imaginary sites of Richard's Roman stations. It would be an interesting minor investigation to see whether recent recensions of the Ordnance maps have in all cases eliminated these errors. It is only within the last fifty years that conclusive demonstrations of the forgery have convinced all scholars that the book is absolutely valueless.

Scepticism had begun earlier, when careful inquiries at Copenhagen had demonstrated the non-existence of any ancient manuscript or modern copy of the book Bertram gave to the world. There is no reasonable doubt that he forged every line of it, and a remarkably

clever forgery it is for a young man¹ who had not even begun his University course. The style is so mature and rounded that one is inclined to believe that its composition is posterior to the early correspondence of Bertram and Stukeley in 1747. Bertram's original motive in writing to Stukeley may have been no worse than a desire to win by flattery the patronage of that eminent person, and his reference to "Richard of Westminster" was but a casual incident of the correspondence. But Stukeley rose so greedily to the bait and so pressed Bertram to produce Richard of Westminster's work, that the poor youth was forced to satisfy the importunities of the English antiquary. Thus what began as a piece of self-advertisement or a boyish practical joke ended in a careful and deliberate forgery. The map sent to Stukeley in 1747 was not difficult to make, and it took two years of importunity to extract the text of the pseudo-Richard from Bertram's hands. A young man in a hurry would not have tarried so long, if he had ready to hand the goods that he had promised to deliver.

It is hardly needful nowadays to state at length the reasons for accusing Bertram of the sole authorship of both map and book. The map is not at all like any mediæval map of Britain, but is clearly based in outline upon the sixteenth or early seventeenth century Dutch maps whose inaccuracies are faithfully copied. The text is only sound when it is a mere compilation from well-known authors. When it gives us fresh information, it is written in a style that no mediæval writer could possibly have composed. The Latin is fluent and readable, despite occasional false concords and sheer blunders. But it is the Latin of an eighteenth century semi-scholar, accustomed to think in his vernacular and singularly destitute of knowledge of mediæval vocabulary, spelling, idiom, and forms of thought. Bertram's own copious commentary is written in exactly the same style as the text which he maintained was composed in the fourteenth century. It is the style of a third-rate editor of the period. It makes a Westminster monk, who died in 1400, almost as familiar with the mysteries of the Druids as the egregious Dr. Stukeley. It suggests that this Westminster monk had had at least a bowing acquaintance with the Deistic

¹ The first detailed statement of the case against "Richard of Cirencester" is in some articles in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1866-67 by B. B. Woodward. The fullest working out of the whole problem is in J. E. B. Mayor's introduction to *Speculum Historiale*, Vol II, XVII-CLXIV, Rolls Series.

controversies of Bertram's own age and some sympathy with the less orthodox side of it. No mediæval writer ever, like the pseudo-Richard, addressed the "candid" or "the benevolent reader". No fourteenth century abbot would have discouraged one of his monks from writing an historical treatise on the ground that it was incompatible with the possession of holy orders. No mediæval monk of Westminster would have known such comparative philology as was known to the eighteenth century. The false Richard not only knew the *Agricola* of Tacitus but quoted it from a sixteenth century printed edition, containing a remarkable printer's error. A still happier prophetic vision caused him to use Camden's *Britannia*, two hundred years before its publication. Add to this that the facsimile supplied to Stukeley, although it deceived the contemporary palæographers as easily as the Latin deceived contemporary scholars, was a gross and palpable forgery that never could have been written in any period of the middle ages.

To conclude I will adopt a simple way of proving that Richard was no mediæval monk. I will read a characteristic passage from his work. None is better for our purpose than his general observations on the question of a "certain person,"¹ Where are now the vestiges of those cities and names which you commemorate? Richard's reply is, "This question may be answered by another". He then goes on as follows (I quote from the enthusiastic Mr. Hatcher's translation): "The negligence and inattention of our ancestors in omitting to collect and preserve such documents as might have been serviceable in this particular, are not deserving of heavy censure, for scarcely any but those in holy orders employed themselves in writing books, and such even esteemed it inconsistent with their sacred office to engage in such profane labours. I rather think I may without danger and offence transmit to posterity that information which I have collected. The good abbot indeed had nearly inspired me with other sentiments." He urged that "all our studies should be directed to the purpose of being useful to others". To this Richard replies: "Is then every honest gratification forbidden? Do not such narratives exhibit proofs of Divine Providence? Does it not hence appear that an evangelical sermon concerning the death and merits of Christ enlightened and subdued a world overrun with gentile superstitions?" The abbot rejoined that

¹ Bk. I, ch. VII., pp. 65-67, ed. 1809.

such things are properly treated of in systems of chronology, and that works intended merely to acquire reputation for their authors should be committed to the flames. Accordingly the modest Richard limits himself to a permissible "chronological abridgement," begging the reader to "pray for him to our heavenly Father who is merciful and inclined to forgiveness".

This is second-rate stuff indeed : but it is just the sort of stuff that no fourteenth century monk could have written. Its standpoint, its language, its mentality, are of the eighteenth century. Even Mr. Hatcher sees this, for he sagely observes, "These remarks prove how much Richard rose superior to the prejudices of his age and profession !"

Bertram never attempted to "live up" to the brilliant achievement of his youth. He either lost health or ambition or was afraid of being found out. Moreover, he had not much time to write more, for he died in 1765, only seven years after his great mystification saw the light. While before 1758 he had written grammars and school books, his chief later production was a Danish translation of an English treatise "on the great advantages of a godly life". Thus the forger prepared for his end by a work of edification. He was not the only literary falsifier in the age of Ireland, Macpherson, Iolo Morgannwg and Chatterton. These were men of very varying grades of blameworthiness, and perhaps we should not attach too much stigma of criminality even to poor Bertram. There are many scholars, even nowadays, who share to some extent the mediæval fashion of blowing alternately hot and cold against forgers ; and in cases of doubt easily persuading themselves that there was some basis of tradition at the back of even the grosser impostures. This is a weakness of the profession, just like the tendency of bibliomaniacs for purloining books, and the similar laxity of a larger section of the general public in respect to umbrellas. But there is no need to labour so obvious a point. In a tale of immoral action there is no moral to be drawn. If there were, I should be inclined to put in a plea for the mediæval forgers with whom I am chiefly concerned against the modern faker of pseudo-mediæval things like Charles Bertram. Am I too much an apologist of my favourite periods when I suggest that the mediæval forger, severe as were his limitations, knew his job at least as well as his modern imitator ? It is a real discredit to the eighteenth century

that it was so easily deceived by Bertram. Nowadays we are not likely to give long shrift to a new artist in forgery like the Anglo-Dane. Yet even now we still lack the rigid criteria which enable us decisively to condemn or accept large categories of Norman charters. But it is a comfortable reflection that all forgeries will ultimately be found out. They sometimes, however, hold the field long enough for the forger to make a considerable reputation, and occasionally even a certain sum of hard cash by his mystification.

2. A BOOKE IN ENGLYSH METRE, of the Great Marchaunt man called "Dives Pragmaticus". . . . 1563. . . . With an introduction by Percy E. Newbery; and remarks on the vocabulary and dialect with a glossary by Henry C. Wyld. 1910. 4to, pp. xxxviii, 16. 5s. *net*.

* * The tract here reproduced is believed to be the sole surviving copy of a quaint little primer which had the laudable object of instructing the young in the names of trades, professions, ranks, and common objects of daily life in their own tongue.

3. A LITIL BOKE the whiche traytieth and reherced many gode thinges necessaries for the . . . Pestilence . . . made by the . . . Bisshop of Arusiens. . . . [London], [1485?]. . . . With an introduction by Guthrie Vine. 1910. 4to, pp. xxxvi, 18. 5s. *net*.

* * Of this little tract, consisting of nine leaves, written by Benedict Kanuti, or Knutsson, Bishop of Västerås, three separate editions are known, but only one copy of each, and an odd leaf are known to have survived.

There is no indication in any edition of the place of printing, date or name of printer, but they are all printed in one of the five types employed by William de Machlinia, who printed first in partnership with John Lettou and afterwards alone in the City of London, at the time when William Caxton was at the most active period of his career at Westminster.

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